

Class Notes for Soc 1435 Social Change in the United States
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Recorded for Feb. 14th, 2006 by Whitney Fox

- Statements in Plain text are made by Dr. Brush –
- *Statements in Italics are comments contributed by students –*

- How Does Florida theorize social change in *Rise of the Creative Class*/What is his thesis?
Some Options:

1. Creativity Creates Value

- “Work Ethic”
- “Shared Creative Spirit”
(Idealist Argument)

Therefore, mapping Florida on to Weber can tie in to...

- Capitalism
- Creative Economy

Florida claims that this “Creative Economy” is so big that it is almost akin to capitalism as a phenomenon

2. The Creative Class is the “new” Dominant Class

- Weber: class is determined by status/honor/prestige as seen through the medium of wealth
- Florida: class is more Marxian, as workers have control over their minds (means of production)
→ This viewpoint *can* be seen as very Marxist (in above sense), or on the other hand not very Marxist at all (blurred line)

Anti-Marxist Arguments:

- *Conditional rather than Relational*
- *May result in exploitation of actual creative class, as no one may take away someone else’s mind – it is their own*

Pro-Marxist Arguments:

- *Ability of creative class is dependent upon labor of working class to survive (a.k.a. Exploitation may occur more/less, depending)*

- How does Florida tie in w/ Durkheim?
He’s on par
- Theoretically (Functional Argument)
- Empirically (Exceptions)
- What is Florida saying about Social Change?
- *The rise of this class will bring about change in society because they [society] will have to eventually be accommodated by all, since the creative class is rapidly growing & operates under a different way of thinking/acting than the former status quo*

This change is much more a functional than a causal one (or so Florida says)

“Social Creativity” ----- “Social Change”

Change being through the mediums of:

Family

Sex

Dress

Etc.

HOWEVER, he (Florida) is NOT stating that the change of the family is driving the new Creative Class

- How does Florida try to present his “bare-bones” argument?
- We think about technology as driving both economic & social change
- If we think about this as the “force of production,” this makes sense. But it is the social relations of production that drive social & cultural change. (Recall time-travel example from book)

** Did everyone like the book? ** How about when compared with McCall? **

- *Florida was far more accessible than McCall, even though maybe a bit far-fetched in terms of his ideas*
- *Thought he was identifying an “important new step” in human evolution that (one may be tempted to call) utopian*
- *Isn’t the “rise of the creative class” akin to the Marxian revolution, with some overlapping elements?*
- *Communism didn’t mesh w/ the messages very much in this book at all*

Mannheim: Utopian ideas in a technical sense; can only be realized if they require the transcendence of the constraints of the current regime

- How did this book appear from a methodological standpoint?
- Not very thick methodologically. Empirically arranges cities in terms of tolerance levels, creativity, etc., but this only shows us correlations b/t cities & rank (and not much else)
- So far, from what we’ve read, what does Florida have to say about inequality?
- *Inequality is not good for creative work*
WHY?
- *People won’t have an environment which is conducive to the sharing of ideas*
What else?
- *He ignores it [inequality] to a great deal, then tries to stray from ideas from overt (i.e. racial) inequality in lieu of talking about class differences. But he almost ignores it*

Notes wage inequality by highlighting higher wage distribution to/for creative class than the working class

Group Work:

- What kinds of challenges are surfacing in your groups?
Putting things into sections, condensing
- What's a good way to get started on a document?
 - If someone works on a draft
 - People can split work evenly & compile later
 - "The only cure to inertia is energy..." so everyone needs to get moving! Keep being productive with these things for the sake of you AND your group

FOR NEXT TIME:

- Each group **MUST** email the draft for the methods & sources section **BEFORE CLASS** on Thursday (2/16)
- Materials handed in today will be handed back (w/ Comments) from Dr. Brush next time